

# Flower Garden Banks

## Exhibit at the Tennessee Aquarium

### Sanctuary Partnerships

For the Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary (FGBNMS), located over 100 miles off the Texas coast, partnerships are a way of life.

Many partnerships focus on scientific study and logistical support, while others allow us to share the wonders of the sanctuary with those who may never visit. The Tennessee Aquarium celebrated just such a partnership with the



Photo: Joyce and Frank Burek

The new Ocean Journey building at the Tennessee Aquarium

opening of its new \$30 million Ocean Journey building on April 29, 2005.

**The Secret Reef**  
The centerpiece of the new Ocean Journey expansion is an immense replica of the Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary, a coral reef system located in the northwestern Gulf of Mexico. This 618,000 gallon saltwater exhibit, the **Secret Reef**, gives visitors a realistic view of the huge, boulder coral formations that comprise the East and West Flower Garden Banks, and the wildlife that depend on them.

Aquarium staff worked closely with the sanctuary to ensure the accuracy of the exhibit and its

accompanying information.

Several of the aquarium staff also visited the FGBNMS for a first hand look.



Photo: Joyce and Frank Burek

### Making a Connection

The Secret Reef exhibit is an immense replica of the Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary.

"It's all about connecting people with nature," said Tim Baker, Tennessee Aquarium Education Director. "Many people learn facts about marine habitats and the amazing species that live in a coral reef. But, experiencing these things at the Flower Garden Banks helped our educators better communicate the wonder, the uniqueness and the value of this precious place to our visitors."

"Our partnership with the Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary breathed life into our **Secret Reef** exhibit in so many fascinating ways."



Photo: Joyce and Frank Burek

**Visit the Tennessee Aquarium at:**  
[www.tnaqua.org](http://www.tnaqua.org)

"Actually see the expanses and the crazy textures of magnificent corals..." Tim Baker, Tennessee Aquarium



NATIONAL MARINE  
SANCTUARIES  
FLOWER  
GARDEN BANKS



NOAA's National Ocean Service

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